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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6750  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2229  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SINGAPORE 000495

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHB  
HHS FOR OGHA  
EAP/MTS - MCOPPOLA  
NEW DELHI FOR JEHRENDREICH  
BANGKOK FOR REO HOWARD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TBIO KFLU EAGR EAIR CASC ETRD ECON SN

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE: FIRST H1N1 CASE CONFIRMED

REF: SINGAPORE 445

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Singapore confirmed its first case of H1N1 Influenza in a 22-year-old woman who returned from a visit to New York on May 26. The Ministry of Health continues to investigate other suspect cases and has instituted Home Quarantine Orders for people found to have had close contact with a confirmed H1N1 case. One American citizen is under quarantine until May 31. The Embassy is monitoring the local H1N1 situation closely, has initiated preventive measures internally (e.g., additional hygiene measures), and will issue an updated warden message. End Summary.

First H1N1 Case Confirmed, More Investigated

¶2. (U) Singapore reported its first case of H1N1 Type A Influenza on May 27. Lab results confirmed late on May 26 that a 22-year-old woman contracted H1N1 during a ten-day visit to New York. The woman is under treatment at the Communicable Disease Center at Tan Tock Seng Hospital and reports indicate that her close contacts will be quarantined and treated with antiviral medications. The Ministry of Health (MOH) is urging passengers who were seated in specific rows on the same Singapore Airlines flight to come forward for medical evaluation. MOH further reported that it is investigating three additional suspect cases on May 27. To date, MOH has investigated 48 cases. In addition to today's H1N1 case, 39 cases tested negative for Influenza Type A and eight tested positive for typical seasonal flu strains.

No Reason for Alarm, Screening Continues

¶3. (SBU) MOH has attempted to prepare the Singapore public for the eventual arrival of H1N1, while noting that the severity of the virus does not appear to be much worse than typical seasonal flu (reftel). MOH lowered its alert level from orange to yellow on May 11 and an RMO contact indicated that Singapore will remain at the Yellow Alert level even with the confirmed case. Thermal scanning

at air, sea and land border checkpoints will continue and physicians have been advised to monitor closely for suspect cases and refer those to the Communicable Disease Center.

American Citizen Traced and Quarantined

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¶4. (SBU) MFA notified Embassy's American Citizens Services (ACS) unit May 26 that Amcit Jason John Burtt is subject to a Home Quarantine Order (HOO). Mr. Burtt confirmed to ACS that he is under quarantine order until Sunday, May 31, at 8:00 PM. Burtt stated he was not on the Singapore Airlines flight that carried the new H1N1 case, but rather connected to Singapore on a Vancouver-to-Tokyo flight in which he was seated in the vicinity of a different confirmed H1N1 case. Burtt said Japanese officials contacted Singapore authorities and provided them with his information. MOH contacted him within 24 hours of his arrival in Singapore and issued the HOO, he added. (Note: MOH has stated that it will mandate quarantines for people found to have had close contact with a confirmed H1N1 case, but not those who have simply traveled to "affected" areas like the United States or other areas with H1N1 cases, such as the United Kingdom and Japan. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) Burtt relayed to ACS that he was in good spirits and has no flu-like symptoms at this time. Burtt is confined at the home of his Singaporean fiance who was on the same flight and is also under quarantine. Burtt stated he was told that he faced a minimum six-month prison sentence and/or SG\$10,000 (US\$7,200) fine if he violated the terms of the order. He claimed that MOH told him 30 people are currently under quarantine in Singapore. He is not sure how many others from his flight were quarantined. Burtt has ACS

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contact information should he need assistance.

Embassy Response and Preventive Measures

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¶6. (SBU) The Embassy has reviewed its tripwires and will remain vigilant and monitor the local situation closely. Announcements to employees and family members have been made encouraging the practice of good personal hygiene. Hand sanitizer has been placed at all elevator vestibules, bathrooms, and the cafeteria entrance, and the Char Force has added a person responsible for wiping railings, door knobs, elevator buttons and other commonly touched surfaces in the Embassy. The Embassy is sending separately to Consular Affairs an updated warden message with a request for overnight clearance.

SHIELDS